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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of news writing instruction in freshman composition to determine whether the diversity of instruction would result in improved writing performance and attitudes of students. Data were gathered from 71 students at a private Oklahoma college randomly assigned to three control groups (taught by a traditional approach) and one treatment group which received one-half semester of news writing instruction. Subjects were given pre- and post-semester tests consisting of a placement test, a writing exercise, and a questionnaire which included the Geer Fear Survey measuring students' self-assessment of their ability, attitude, motivation, and practicability. Writing instructors used a holistic grading scale to grade the essay portion of the tests. Results revealed no significant difference between the treatment and control groups for six of the seven factors examined--anxiety; self-assessment; motivation; attitude; grammar and mechanics; and writing skills. Results, however, did reveal a significant difference in the students' perception of the practicality of the writing instruction they received for work after college. More research, especially longitudinal evaluation, is called for to measure these seven factors more conclusively. (Twenty-nine references are attached.) (KEH)

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THE EFFECT OF NEWS WRITING INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION I ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades composition pedagogy in secondary and higher education has undergone considerable change. The central theme of this revolution involves the process of writing rather than the form the written product takes.

The new emphasis on writing as process has some drawbacks, but leaders in composition instruction agree that the move from the what of composing (the product) to the how (the process) has been healthy and valuable.

This paper contends that although the revolution in composition instruction has taken a gigantic step in the right direction because of the writing process emphasis, the revolution needs to take another step--perhaps not as gigantic, but a step none-the-less--to achieve more effective writing instruction in secondary and higher education.

This additional step revolves around one word: diversity. Winston Weathers introduced the concept of diversity in writing instruction:

> I'm asking simply to be exposed to, and informed about, the full range of compositional possibilities. . . That I be introduced to all the tools, right now, that all the "ways of writing" be spread out before. . . (1976, p. 1)

Ten years later Les Perelman continued the theme of diversity in writing instruction:

> Rather than deny to our students that there is anything peculiar about the type of writing they produce in our

> classroom or attempt to make it more "real," we need to make them aware that there is no one normal or correct form of discourse, just as there is no one correct way to dress. While teaching them to be comfortable in the garments we require them to wear for us, we need to instill in them both a sense that there are other equally valid forms of clothing and a knowledge of how to wear them. (1986, p. 478)

Diversity in composition instruction implies the need for more varied, interdisciplinary approaches toward teaching writing.

Students in English composition classes typically learn how to write the basic five paragraph essay with an introduction, three body paragraphs with topic sentences, and a conclusion. They often also learn how to express themselves elegantly, with flowery words and long complex sentences. Such instruction is certainly useful and appropriate at times, but it is also narrowly-focused and may be a disservice to students. Students need to learn that there are many writing forms and writing styles, some of which are not ornate and complex.

In this paper, the author contends, therefore, that composition teachers should not only expose high school students and college freshmen to writing as process, but they should also expose students to different forms and styles of writing, or, as Perelman aptly put it, "other equally valid forms of clothing." Students' knowledge of other writing forms, such as news writing, will enhance and supplement what they already know a lot about (i.e., traditional essay writing).

New approaches that stress more diverse content and methods in teaching composition may prove to be useful in responding to two important concerns. First, evidence in recent years of declining writing skills among high school and college graduates seems to reveal that perhaps old methods have not been effective. Second, many students seem to dislike English classes intensely, and they fail to see practical application to the "real" world for the writing instruction they receive. Diversity of instruction may reap the benefits of improved skills and improved attitudes about writing.

The author built on what one researcher (Ralsman, 1984) did with technical writing in freshman composition and suggested another, relatively unexplored, approach: the teaching of news writing in freshman composition. The author predicted that students exposed to news writing would exhibit positive results in several important areas.

Research Question

> What effect does news writing instruction in freshman English composition have on students' anxiety toward writing; their self-assessment of their writing ability; their attitude toward writing; their motivation to improve their writing; their view of the practicality of writing instruction for work after college; and their progress in grammar, mechanics, and writing skills?

The author conducted a study in the English Composition I classes at a small, private, liberal arts college in Oklahoma to examine the effect news writing instruction had on the writing performance and attitudes of students.

The study included news writing instruction in one treatment group and used pre-tests and post-tests to determine if there were

significant differences between the treatment group and three control groups that received traditional composition instruction.

Hypotheses

The study tested the following main hypothesis:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will show less anxiety about writing through lower scores on the Geer Fear Survey than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

The possibility of lowered anxiety toward writing led to other sub-hypotheses as follows:

> Students were taught news writing in English Composition I will
>
> (1) rate their writing ability higher than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.
>
> (2) display a better attitude about their writing ability then students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.
>
> (3) display a higher motivation to learn to write that students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.
>
> (4) view that instruction as more practical for work after college than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.
>
> (5) show more important in their scores on the English 3200 grammar and mechanics pre-test and post-test than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.
>
> (6) show more improvement in their scores on a writing pre-test and post-test that students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

Operational Definitions

Traditional content was defined as the content of James M. McCrimmon's Writing With A Purpose, the composition textbook used at the college.

News writing content included instruction in the basic form and style of news writing. This content included the inverted

pyramid, lead writing, short paragraphs, attribution to source material, use of third person, and an emphasis on conciseness and brevity. This approach placed less emphasis on personal experience (subjective) writing and creativity.

Anxiety was measured by responses to the Geer Fear Survey, a scale that James Geer developed in 1965. This survey asks students to rate individual stimuli as to how strongly or weakly a particular stimulus generates an anxiety reaction. The survey lists 50 possible fear-producing stimuli such as "rats," "death or injury of a loved one," "speaking in public," and "public humiliation."

Raisman (1984, p. 146) altered Geer's survey slightly, adding educationally-induced stimuli, such as "failing a test," "writing papers for a grade," "teachers," "English classes," "spelling words," and "reading." This study used these six items. Students responded to the 50-item survey on a scale of zero (no reaction) to six (terror).

A questionnaire was designed specifically for this study to measure the sub-hypotheses on students' self-assessment of their writing ability, their attitude toward writing, their motivation to improve their writing, and their view of the practicality of writing instruction for work after college.

For sub-hypothesis 5, the author measured progress in grammar and mechanics skills by scores on the 100-point pre-test and post-test from English 3200, a programmed and usage textbook by Joseph Blumenthal.

For sub-hypothesis 6, the author measured progress in writing

skills by using a writing assignment given to students in all groups before and after the study. Two instructors evaluated each student's response holistically.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The option of including more diverse content, especially news writing instruction, is not common in secondary and higher education composition. The literature included a few works that advocated more diverse approaches toward teaching composition. Corbett said, for example, that English teachers have paid increased attention to the teaching of business, professional, and technical writing (1987, p. 450). This increased attention, however, has occurred primarily in upper division courses at colleges and universities.

A literature review relevant to this study needed to deal with two questions:

(1) Why bother to try a more diverse approach toward teaching English composition in secondary and higher education?

(2) Has news writing instruction been used in English composition?

Why Bother?

There are four key reasons why it might be useful to teach news writing in English composition: students' weak writing skills, students' strong dislike of English, students' failure to see the value of writing instruction, and the need for more diversity.

Weak writing skills of high school and college graduates have created turbulence in the area of composition pedagogy.

The reasons behind the weak writing skills of students are numerous and complex. Three key factors within the scope of this study involve (1) the writing style taught in traditional composition classes, (2) lack of an audience for the writing and (3) writing without a body of knowledge.

Students' writing skills may be weak (i.e., unclear, confusing, wordy) simply because they are not taught how to write clearly. Joseph Williams, a respected English professor, said, "the most common reason for bad writing is, I think, the simplest: Most writers have just never learned how to write clearly and directly in the first place" (1985, p. 5). Mina Shaughnessy, who did landmark research on remedial writers, said that "much of the writing English teachers promote, consciously or unconsciously, is not simple" because English teachers' judgments, instead, are "generally shaped by years of exposure to belletristic literature," (1977, p. 196).

In Basic News Writing, Melvin Mencher said that good journalistic writing is clear and simple; however, "[d]espite the clarity of such writing, teachers of high school and college English resist this kind of writing. Worse, they condemn it" (1983, p. 280). Mencher cited a study in which Rosemary Hake and Joseph Williams discovered that English teachers consistently preferred muddy prose to clear writing and found more errors in clearly written essays than in complicated essays even though the essays were exactly the same except for style (1981).

Dennis Jones (1982) found similar results. When asked to choose the best journalistic stories, graders with an English

background typically chose the longest and wordiest stories.

Although certainly not all English teachers promote unclear and wordy writing, the literature seemed to reveal that many do. And, because they do, composition instruction is weakened and contributes to students' poor writing skills.

The fact that English composition instruction typically occurs in a vacuum without a realistic audience may also contribute to students' weak writing skills. Glynda Hull and David Bartholomae explained:

> Students need to see that the writing the do serves some end, and they need to hear from a reader--a person or a roomful of people willing to be interested, surprised, pleased, or in some way engaged--how far afield or close to the mark they've come. (1986, P. 51)

Daniel Levinson, who promoted instruction in journalistic writing, pointed out that "[n]othing refines the higher order writing skills. . . like facing an audience that really cares what you write about and how you write about it" (1985, p. 32).

In typical English composition instruction, it is difficult to create situations in which students see that their writing serves a useful end. With news writing, however, it is easier for teachers to create realistic audiences for student writing and for students to see the value of their writing. Clarence Hach said that teaching writing skills in a journalism class is easier than in an English class "because students have a sense of an immediate audience" (1975, p. 26).

Weak writing skills may also be the result in traditional

composition because students typically write without a body of knowledge. Instead they write expressively or creatively, often about personal experiences. Mike Rose said, "Few academic assignments (outside of composition) require a student to produce material ex nihilo" (1983, p. 119).

Expressive or personal experience writing is useful and should certainly not be eliminated, but it should not be taught exclusively. News writing instruction in English composition would combat all three of these problems that contribute to weak writing skills: students would be more likely to learn a clearer and more concise writing style, would write to an expanded and more realistic audience, and would write either out of a body of knowledge or on topics in which they obtain the content through interviews, fact sheets, etc.

The second reason for bothering to try out more diverse teaching approaches is to help motivate students and to improve their attitudes about writing instruction. Most students simply do not like English composition even though it is so vitally important.

The third "why bother?" is that composition teachers in secondary and higher education must help students understand that writing skills are critically important outside of the classroom.

Studies of the kinds of writing college graduates do lend credence to the accusation that traditional composition instruction does not prepare students as well as it could for the work world after graduation. Harwood's survey of 500 alumni of a small, state-supported institution found that the typical graduate did

little of the creative or reflective writing commonly taught in English courses (1982, p. 283).

Elizabeth Tebeaux argued that traditional composition does not prepare students adequately for the writing they will do after college (1988, p. 14). Tebeaux said she can trace a number of employee writing problems to the strategies individuals learned in freshman comp (p. 9).

Diversity, discussed earlier, is the third reason to bother searching for new methods of teaching English composition.

In his widely-cited work A Theory of Discourse, James Kinneavy (1971) discussed four types of written discourse: referential, persuasive, literary, and expressive. Kinneavy later wrote the important lesson to be drawn is that "no composition program can afford to neglect any of these basic aims of discourse" (1981, p. 97). However, referential discourse, which Kinneavy defines as informative, exploratory, or scientific and includes news writing, is typically ignored in secondary and higher education composition programs. Students receive lopsided, and perhaps unfair, instruction because they are not exposed to, in Weather's words, "the full range of compositional possibilities" (1975, p. 1).

News Writing in Composition

The literature review revealed that journalistic writing instruction in high school English and college composition classes is not common.

One aspect of journalistic writing instruction that is used in composition instruction is the "5 Ws and H"--who, what, when,

where, why, and how--that news writing teachers use to help students formulate questions for news sources and content for news stories. This method is often used as a pre-writing technique.

Beyond the "5 Ws and H," however, journalistic writing instruction is not part of composition classes. A search in the Education Index and the Humanities Index back to July 1980 revealed no articles that dealt with using basic news writing instruction (either as a supplemental unit or as the entire course content) in freshman composition. An ERIC database search linking "Writing (Composition)" and "News Writing" and two searches linking "English Instruction" and "News Writing" and "Writing (Composition)" and "News Reporting" produced similar results.

Several articles did hint that journalistic writing should perhaps be considered as an alternative approach to traditional freshman composition.

Tohtz and Marsh wrote that the best procedure for teaching a student how to write was to establish the classroom as an "analogical model of a publications office" (1981, p. 327). The instructors stopped short of teaching basic news writing, but the approach they described did involve students in responsible, active performance.

An article by John Pauly in The ABCA Bulletin, a business publication, presented a strong case for including journalism instruction in freshman composition. He wrote, "courses in journalism and business writing offer a more effective and efficient way of teaching undergraduate students to write than courses in freshman composition do" (1983, p. 6). Pauly concluded,

"Journalism and business writing courses cut through all the romantic bugaboo about creativity and convince students that anyone with courage, patience, and determination can learn to write," (p. 8).

Dennis Jones said there are two distinct types of writing teachers--those who teach journalism and those who teach English. He cited his dissertation research that showed how English teachers seemed to prefer wordy and complex writing to concise, clear writing. Jones concluded that "[i]t's time to stop questioning the effectiveness of journalistic writing instruction. It's time to start shouting that what we do works" (1986, p. 29).

Jack Dvorak argued that journalism plays an important role in the secondary school language arts curriculum in the context of the educational reform movement. He contended that

> journalism has been fulfilling several elements considered crucial in the language arts program for many years--in many cases more completely, more richly and more understandably for students than many traditional English composition courses and other English writing courses. (1985, p. 1)

In 1981 Robert Koziol studied high school students who took journalism and found that the clear advantage of journalism over English was that the journalistic techniques students used provided an approach to writing that was clear, precise, and understandable--while at the same time enjoyable (p. 12). His results revealed that news writing instruction has the potential to solve some of the problems of traditional composition (e.g., lack of clarity,

poor student attitudes).

Levinson argued that journalism courses not only accomplish the basic task of teaching students to write better, but they also provide a good way for students to learn some important lessons, such as facing the consequences of what they have written (1985, p. 32).

Last, two articles in Journalism Educator open the door for more cooperation between composition and news writing--two disciplines keenly interested in writing instruction. Jerome Zurek pointed out that although teaching writing and developing better news writers are key concerns of journalism educators, texts and journals in the field "show little knowledge of what might be called the current revolution in composition instruction" (1987, p. 19). Zurek highlighted the key development in composition teaching over the past two decades--the writing process.

In a 1987 JE article I discussed four topics in composition pertinent to journalism instruction: writing as a process, writing across the curriculum, modes of instruction, and dealing with errors.

These articles point to the advantages of news writing instruction and suggest that these strengths might counteract some of the weaknesses of traditional composition. Based on this literature, this study contended that including basic news writing as part of a freshman composition course would, as Pauly suggested, "cut through all the romantic bugaboo about creativity" and help students learn to write and see the value of writing instruction. Students may even learn to like composition.

Methodology

This study asked what effect news writing instruction in freshman English composition had on students' anxiety toward writing (the main hypothesis) and on students' self-assessment of their writing ability, their attitude toward writing, their motivation to improve their writing, their view of the practicality of writing instruction for work after college, their progress in grammar and mechanics skills, and their progress in writing skills.

The author conducted a study in the English Composition I classes at Bartlesville Wesleyan College (BWC) in Bartlesville, OK in the fall of 1986. The general format of the study included news writing instruction in one randomly-assigned treatment group and used pre-tests and post-tests to determine if there were significant differences between the treatment group and three randomly-assigned control groups.

To test the main hypothesis, incoming freshmen at BWC completed the Geer Fear Survey at the beginning of the semester and again near the end of the 17-week semester.

The author tested the sub-hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 via a questionnaire designed for this study because the literature review did not reveal any studies that tested the factors included in these sub-hypotheses. The author used English 3200 pre and post-tests to test sub-hypotheses 5 and a writing exercise to test sub-hypothesis 6.

During freshman orientation, the author helped administer the English placement test to 114 students. The test consisted of the English 3200 pre-test, the writing exercise, and Questionnaire A,

which included the Geer Fear Survey. The author and a colleague used a holistic grading scale to grade the essay portion of the test (rater correlation was .84).

Fifteen students with the weakest skills were placed in a Developmental English class, 15 others enrolled in an evening class, and 13 students who took the pre-test left school the first week. This left 71 students who were randomly assigned to four day sections (one treatment, three control) of English Composition I.

At the end of the semester, students in the four sections took the English 3200 test and writing exercise again. They also completed Questionnaire B, which contained the Geer Fear Survey with the items rearranged.

Classroom Instruction

Three part-time instructors taught the control groups, using the traditional approach presented in James McCrimmon's Writing with a Purpose. Students in the three control groups completed similar assignments, such as narrative, comparison/contrast, classification, descriptive, and process essays. Each instructor covered the same chapters.

For the treatment group, the author included news writing instruction for one-half the semester, giving lectures on the principles of basic news writing. After mid-semester break, the author returned to traditional English Composition I instruction for eight weeks, using the McCrimmon textbook. The author covered the same nine chapters that the instructors of the control groups covered, although, of course, more quickly.

Method of Analysis

The method of analysis to test the hypotheses was straightforward.

The starting point was to use descriptive statistics to calculate the frequencies, percentages, and means of the various scores from the control groups and treatment group on the pre-test and post-test Geer Fear Survey: Questionnaires A and B measuring students' self-assessment of their ability, attitude, motivation, and practicality; the English 3200 pre-test and post-test; and the writing assignment pre-test and post-test.

Although the Likert scale for the items on Questionnaires A and B produced interval data, the best method of analysis for sub-hypotheses 1 through 4 was the chi square to calculate the difference between the pre-test and post-test rating of each student on each item.

The author used the t-test on the main hypothesis (the Geer Fear Survey), sub-hypothesis 5 (English 3200), and sub-hypothesis 6 (the writing exercise) to compare the mean scores for the treatment group and the control groups to determine if any differences were significant

Findings

Of the 71 students randomly assigned to the three control groups and one treatment group at the start of the semester, 56 (79%) completed the post-test. (Several students dropped out during the semester and a few did not take the post-test.)

For the statistical analysis, the author combined the three

randomly assigned control groups (N of 38) and compared the responses of those students on the pre-tests and post-tests to the responses of the students in the treatment group (N of 18).

Following are the results of the t-tests and chi square tests.

The main hypothesis:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will show less anxiety toward writing through lower scores on the Geer Fear Survey than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

The author used the t-test to determine if any change in students' anxiety between the control group and treatment group was significant. The author grouped and totaled the responses for each student on three items: "writing papers for a grade," "English classes," and "spelling words." Next, the author calculated the grand mean scores on the pre-test for the students in the randomly-selected control groups and the students in the treatment group.

On the pre-test, the mean of the three fear survey items for the control groups was 5.29, while the mean of the items for the treatment group was 6.83. The p value of 0.1071 revealed that the difference between these two means was not significant at the .05 level.

The calculations for the same items on the post-test Geer Fear Survey showed that for both the control and treatment groups, student anxiety lessened about the three educationally-induced stimuli. The mean of the three items for the control groups decreased to 4.43, while the mean for the three items for the treatment group dropped to 5.33. Once again, however, the p value of 0.3585 revealed that the difference between the two means was not significant. Thus, the main hypothesis was rejected.

Results of Sub-Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4:

These hypotheses measured students' self-assessment of their writing ability, attitudes toward writing, motivation to improve their writing, and views of the practicality of writing instruction. Questionnaire A and B contained questions to measure these areas. Students responded to each question on a Likert scale of 5 (usually representing "excellent" or "very") to 1 (usually representing "poor" or "not at all").

For sub-hypotheses 1 through 4, the chi square test tabulated the frequency of rating changes on each item for each student in the control and treatment groups and then compared observed and expected frequencies to determine if the differences in distribution were significant.

Sub-hypothesis 1:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will rate their writing ability higher than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content through higher scores on a questionnaire.

Questionnaires A and B each contained seven questions designed to measure students' self-assessment of their writing ability. None of the seven questions indicated a significant relationship between the item and the treatment. Thus, sub-hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Sub-hypothesis 2:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will display a better attitude about their writing ability through higher scores on a questionnaire than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

Questionnaires A and B each contained the same items designed to measure students' attitudes about writing. None of the three

items indicated a significant relationship between the item and the treatment, so sub-hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Sub-hypothesis 3:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will display a higher motivation to learn to write through higher scores on a questionnaire than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

Questionnaires A and B each contained four items designed to measure students' motivation to improve their writing skills. None of the four items indicated a significant relationship between the item and the treatment, so sub-hypothesis 3 was also rejected.

Sub-hypothesis 4:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will view that instruction as more practical for work after college through higher scores on a questionnaire than students taught more traditional, less diverse content.

Questionnaire B contained three items designed to measure students' view of the practicality of the writing instruction they received in English Composition I.

The key item asked for students to evaluate the practicality of writing instruction by responding to this question: How helpful for the world of work do you view the writing instruction you received in English Composition I this fall?

Students responded on a scale of 5 (very) to 1 (not at all). The chi square of 13.197, p of 0.010 indicated that a statistically significant relationship did exist between the treatment and this item. Sub-hypothesis 4 was accepted.

Sub-hypothesis 5:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will show more improvement in their scores on the English 3200 grammar and mechanics pre-test and post-test than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

The author used the t-test to determine if any changes in the students' scores on the English 3200 pre-test and post-test between the control group and treatment group were significant.

Students in the control group improved their English 3200 scores an average of 4.46 points, while students in the treatment group improved their scores 5.33 points. The p value of 0.7363 revealed that the difference between these two means was not significant. Sub-hypothesis 5 was rejected.

Sub-hypothesis 6:

> Students taught news writing in English Composition I will show more improvement in their scores on a writing pre-test and post-test than students taught a more traditional, less diverse content.

The t-test procedures for sub-hypothesis 6 involved averaging the two raters' holistic scores on the pre-test and post-test writing exercise. The pre-test average was then subtracted from the post-test average to determine the amount of improvement. Students in the control group improved their scores an average of 0.5263 points, while students in the treatment group improved their scores an average of 0.7500 points. The p value of 0.3296 revealed that the difference was not significant. Sub-hypothesis 6 was rejected.

Discussion

This study examined the effect news writing instruction in freshman English composition had on students' anxiety toward writing (the main hypothesis) and on six sub-hypotheses.

The statistical analysis indicated that for six of the seven factors (anxiety, self-assessment, attitude, motivation, grammar and mechanics, and writing skills) there was no significant

difference between the scores of students in the treatment group and those in the control groups.

The only significant difference occurred in the students' perception of the practicality of the writing instruction they received for work after college. Students in the treatment group that received the more diverse, non-traditional news writing instruction viewed that instruction as more practical for work after college than the traditional instruction students in the control groups received.

Although there is a body of literature that seems to provide a convincing argument for the necessity of more diverse writing instruction, this study did not provide empirical support for such an idea. The lack of significant results could, of course, simply be due to the fact that more diverse writing instruction does not have a positive effect on students' writing performance and attitudes and, consequently, does not combat some of the traditional weaknesses of English composition instruction.

Another reason for the lack of significant results could be the time limitation and related difficulties involved in measuring writing improvement. Shaughnessy said that because writing is such a slow-developing skill, it should be measured over longer periods than a semester (1976, p. 146). Witte and Faigley also pointed out that "even if the development of writing skills is accelerated by means of instruction, growth along those dimensions which affect writing quality may occur so slowly as not to be meaningful after a relatively short time" (1983, p. 36)

Even if the treatment accelerated students' writing skills or

began to change their attitudes about writing, the growth might not have been enough to be significant over the course of the semester. Students in the treatment group showed a greater decrease in anxiety (1.50 versus 0.86 for the control groups), more improvement in their scores on the English 3200 test (5.33 points to 4.46), and more improvement in their scores on the writing exercise (.7500 versus .5263). These results, although seeming to indicate a trend, were not enough to be significant.

This study did not reveal a significant difference in how students' in viewed the practicality of the writing instruction they received for work after college. Perhaps the practicality factor was readily obvious to the students. Other affective factors measured (anxiety, attitude, motivation) may require longer periods of time for changes to occur.

On Questionnaire B, students had the opportunity to respond in writing to "Name two things in this course that were new to you" and "Name two things you considered a waste of time." Eleven of 18 students (61%) in the treatment group said the emphasis on news writing was new. None of the students said it was a waste of time.

Conclusion

This study did not prove that news writing instruction in English Composition I has a positive effect on students' attitudes about writing and their writing performance. The results of this study do not necessarily squelch the idea that more diverse writing instruction may be useful in combating some of the weaknesses of traditional composition.

The author believes the idea that more diverse writing

instruction is desirable is still alive for two reasons. First, some solid literature supports this view. The fact that articles which discuss the weaknesses of traditional composition and suggest changes continue to appear regularly in professional journals seems to reveal that this issue is alive and well. The weaknesses of traditional composition are not going away.

Second, the need for more diverse writing instruction is still alive because common educational sense tells us that students who are motivated to learn do better than those who are less motivated. Thus, it seems only logical (especially based on the literature review) that if students receive less traditional, more diverse, and more practical writing instruction, they will be more motivated to learn to write, will have better attitudes about writing and writing instruction, will show more improvement, and will perhaps even be less anxious about writing.

Different research techniques, particularly longitudinal studies, are necessary to ground this idea in solid research and determine whether more diverse writing instruction, such as news writing instruction, is indeed valid, necessary, and useful.

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